

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

September 16, 2008

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a study session at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 16th day of September, 2008, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Butler, Cubberley, Dillingham, Griffith, Kovach, Quinn, Thompson, Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT: Councilmember Ezzell

DISCUSSION REGARDING RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO APPOINT A SPECIAL COMMISSION TO CONSIDER FUTURE RAIL TRANSIT OPTIONS IN THE OKLAHOMA CITY METROPOLITAN AREA, FUTURE USES OF UNION STATION AND ITS ASSOCIATED RAIL LINES TO ENHANCE FUTURE RAIL TRANSIT FOR THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA, AND ALTERNATE ROUTES FOR THE INTERSTATE 40 CROSSTOWN EXPRESSWAY.

The City Council Transportation Committee previously reviewed a proposal submitted by the Oklahomans for New Transportation Alternatives Coalition (OnTrac) in its meetings of July 31 and August 21, 2008, asked the Council to adopt a resolution requesting the Governor to appoint a Special Commission to consider future rail transit options in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, future uses of the Union Station and its associated rail lines to enhance future rail transit, and alternative routes for the Interstate 40 Crosstown Expressway. The Transportation Committee supported an amended version of the resolution, which included moving the alignment of the I-40 Crosstown 400 feet south of the planned alignment to bypass the Union Station rail yard.

Mr. Marion Hutchison, representing OnTrac, said the Oklahoma based non-profit public interest organization consisted of a nine member board including rail transit experts and community leaders. OnTrac's mission is to ensure the future of intermodal transportation opportunities for Oklahoma and its current project is to save the Oklahoma City Union Station rail yard from destruction. He said the rail transit stimulates economic development; provides safe, reliable, inexpensive, energy-efficient transportation; reduces vehicular traffic and congestion; lowers carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming; reduces unhealthy ozone levels; improves air quality; and provides an important means of transportation for military facilities. He said OnTrac funded a study on the economic benefits of rail transit in Oklahoma prepared by Garl B. Latham, Latham Rail Services, which indicates that Dallas' current system, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), has resulted in \$127 million in total state and local tax revenues. He said a strong healthy intermodal transportation facility has been proven to promote economic development and re-development in the areas serviced by the light and commuter rail services.

Mr. Hutchison said Oklahoma City is ranked 48 out of 50 on public transit use and the lack of transportation is due to not having an intermodal transit system. He said rising fuel costs threaten our economy and standard of living and there is now a public demand for inexpensive transportation alternatives. He presented both light rail and commuter rail systems from Salt Lake City, Dallas, Denver, Santa Fe, Seattle, and Albuquerque and said the foundation to a good intermodal transportation facility is its central hub. The movement of passengers from one mode of transportation to another is essential for the system to function at its highest capacity. He said intermodal systems can include a variety of services such as commuter rail, diesel powered trains operating on existing tracks; light rail, electric trains operating on new dedicated tracks; and bus/trolley services. Mr. Hutchison said Oklahoma City's Union Station and its rail yard could operate as an intermodal system facility as it provides both the facility and the adequate space needed for a good system.

Mr. Hutchison said the I-40 Crosstown Expressway is currently under construction to be realigned and the chosen route is along the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way through the Union Station rail

yard. He said with construction of this project, the Union Station and its rail yard would be lost as the critical foundation and future hub for an intermodal system. He said the resolution for Council's consideration includes language to change the realignment 400 feet to the south, thus allowing the Union Station rail yard to remain. He said the Union Station is a crucial hub for a future intermodal transportation system with rail connections to other cities, as well as, the State Capitol Complex, OU Health Sciences Center, and Will Rogers Airport. He suggested it could also have important linkage to the State's military installations.

Mr. Hutchison said shifting a portion of the Crosstown Expressway 300 feet to the south would allow the interstate highway to be built almost as planned using the same right-of-way that had already been purchased. He said it would also preserve the Core to Shore plans for revitalization of the area. He said saving the rail yard will take support from cities in central Oklahoma cities and OnTrac is requesting cities adopt resolutions like the one presented to Norman. He added El Reno and Chickasha have already adopted resolutions urging preservation of the rail yard, with the cities of Shawnee, Edmond, Midwest City and now Norman considering similar resolutions.

Mayor Rosenthal referenced Albuquerque's commuter rail system and said New Mexico State legislature created a funding mechanism to make the system work and felt cities in Oklahoma would need to work with legislators on funding solutions to have a viable system in Oklahoma. Councilmember Dillingham said this resolution allows Norman to take the role and play a part in a regional solution. She felt intermodal transportation was vital to Tinker Air Force Base and economic development. Councilmember Kovach proposed an amendment to the resolution that added language that the Governor direct the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to proceed with only those aspects of the Crosstown Expressway that do not affect Union Station's rail yard or connecting rail lines until a Special Commission could study alternatives. Mayor Rosenthal suggested language be added stating the proposal fits within the goals outlined in the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement, providing alternative transportation and reducing automobile emissions.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "OnTrac Ensuring Oklahoma's Rail Transit Future," presented by Marion Hutchison
2. Memorandum dated September 11, 2008, from Linda R. Price, Revitalization Manager, to Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
3. Resolution No. R-0809-33
4. Letter dated July 21, 2008, from Charles Wesner, Executive Committee Chairman, OnTrac, to Councilmember Tom Kovach with attachment, proposed resolution
5. Rail Transit, An Oklahoma Economic Opportunity!, a preliminary study prepared by Garl B. Latham, Latham Railway Services
6. Resolution No. R-0304-78
7. Pertinent excerpts from City Council minutes of March 9, 2004
8. Pertinent excerpts from Transportation Committee minutes of July 31, 2008, and August 21, 2008
9. Resolution of the Oklahoma Chapter of the Sierra Club adopted August, 2008
10. Letter dated February 8, 2004, from Marvin D. Monaghan, Former DART Board Member, Mobility Dallas Council, to Mr. Tom Elmore, Executive Director, Norman American Transportation Institute
11. Transit discussion transcribed by Marion Hutchison from the July 14, 2008, Oklahoma City Council meeting

Participants in discussion

1. Mr. Marion Hutchison, OnTrac Board Member
2. Mr. Tom Sherman, OnTrac Board Member

DISCUSSION REGARDING CHANGE ORDER NO. ONE TO CONTRACT NO. K-0809-39 WITH COMMERCIAL CONCRETE INCREASING THE CONTRACT AMOUNT BY \$74,816 FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE CURB AND GUTTER ON HADDOCK STREET BETWEEN STUBBEMAN AVENUE AND PETERS AVENUE.

City Council, in its meeting of July 22, 2008, approved Contract No. K-0809-39 with Commercial Concrete in the amount of \$88,194 for the FYE 2008 Bond Rehabilitation Project at Rancho and Villa Drives. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said pavement reconstruction of Haddock Street between Stubbeman Avenue and Peters Avenue is a Capital Improvement Project included in the FYE 2008 Budget and did not originally include replacement of the existing curb and gutter. Since the project was estimated and budgeted at \$46,805, the curb and gutter has experienced extensive failures making it unserviceable and will require total replacement. He said Wylie Road between Leslie Lane and Lindsey Street was scheduled to have the pavement milled and repaved in the FYE 2009 Budget at a cost of \$77,746. Mr. O'Leary said this project can be rescheduled to the FYE 2010 Budget without causing any adverse impact to the overall project scope or safety of the citizens driving on this road.

Mr. O'Leary said due to very favorable bids received from Commercial Concrete for the FYE 2008 Bond Rehabilitation Project, the curb and gutter project on Haddock can be completed at a cost of \$74,816, which is approximately half of the estimated cost for the project under current Street Division bid prices. He said Commercial Concrete has agreed to extend their bid price to perform this work and Staff recommends approval of the Change Order.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated September 8, 2008, from Greg Hall, Street Superintendent, to Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
2. Change Order No. One to Contract No. K-0809-39

Participants in discussion

1. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works
2. Mr. Greg Hall, Street Superintendent

DISCUSSION REGARDING AN ALTERNATIVE FUEL PROGRAM FOR THE CITY OF NORMAN.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said when Staff began researching the topic of fuel alternatives, there were very little written policies in existence and he felt that was partly because this is such a rapidly changing program. He said he did not think fuel prices were going to come down much in the future and felt if Council moves forward to adopt an Alternative Fuel Program, the City of Norman would be on the leading edge in the state for this type of program. He said the Program includes the implementation of alternative fuel technology; monitoring new technological advances to suit needs; purchasing vehicles based on operational issues, fiscal concerns, and environmental stewardship; and that the vehicles and equipment replaced be in its top three fuel class. He said the program promotes environmental stewardship by increasing the use of alternative fuels and vehicles; reducing harmful emissions; reducing dependency of foreign oils; promoting the reduction of petroleum use through blended fuels, hybrids, and idle reduction; and contributing to a cleaner environment and a greener Norman.

Mr. O'Leary discussed the benefits of using natural gas (CNG) vehicles and said as far as air pollution, there is a 67% to 94% reduction in particulate matter, a 32% to 73% reduction in nitrogen oxides, and a 69% to 83% reduction in non-methane hydrocarbons with CNG vehicles opposed to unleaded fuel. He said the noise reduction in CNG vehicles is 50% behind the vehicle, 90% inside the vehicle, and 98% standing beside the vehicle. Mr. Mike White, Fleet Superintendent, said the City currently has 742 rolling stock including 65 electric vehicles, two hybrids, and 29 flex fuel vehicles, which have the ability to run on both unleaded 85% ethanol fuel.

Mr. White highlighted Staff's recommendations for the FYE 2009 alternative fuel vehicle purchases as three CNG light duty trucks; one CNG commercial and residential sanitation trucks; nine hybrid vehicles; 14 biodiesel vehicles; and 12 flex fuel vehicles. Mr. White said the City currently has one fueling station for CNG vehicles and if Staff moved forward with this proposal, additional fueling stations would be needed. He said there were two options for CNG fill up, the fast fill and the slow fill. The slow fill method takes advantage of downtime by refueling overnight or while the vehicle is not in use, completely unattended. This would be the preferred method for larger vehicles such as sanitation trucks, etc. Mr. O'Leary said since CNG requires a more frequent fuel fill up, Staff is proposing to equip the sanitation trucks with additional tanks that will allow the trucks to run their entire route and use the slow fill process at night. He said the extra tanks make the trucks bigger and longer, which could have an affect on their turning radius, etc.; therefore, Staff is proposing to start with only replacing two sanitation trucks in the FYE 2009 Budget to see how they will work with the program. Mr. O'Leary said CNG vehicles require additional maintenance with higher tune-up costs and an annual inspection but, the City has two certified mechanics currently on staff who can perform the necessary maintenance on the vehicles. The increased vehicle cost is approximately \$15,000 per vehicle with an annual fuel cost savings of \$2,500 resulting in a cost recovery period of six years. The hybrid vehicles have an increased cost of approximately \$4,000 per vehicle with an annual fuel savings of \$250 resulting in a cost recovery period of 18 years.

Mr. O'Leary highlighted additional capital improvements included in Staff's recommendation as:

- Development of a CNG infrastructure fast-fill and slow-fill station;
- Hiring a grant consulting firm to pursue grant opportunities;
- Development of a south side fueling facility; and
- Installation of an above ground diesel storage tank for Fire Stations.

He said the cost of a combination slow-fill/fast-fill station is in excess of \$350,000 and a slow-fill tank costs approximately \$10,000. The University of Oklahoma has recently completed a new fuel facility and has offered to makes its facility available for the City of Norman for City vehicles. The cost of that fuel from OU would be \$2.13 per gallon and if the City builds its own facility the cost would be \$1.01 per gallon.

The projected FYE 2009 Budget impacts if the Alternative Fuel Program is implemented are as follows:

- Capital Budget for FYE 2009 may exceed a \$279,000 budget increase
- Fuel savings is estimated at \$51,000
- B-20/biodiesel at today's cost, may increase FYE 2009 fuel budget by an estimated \$70,500

Councilmembers felt Staff should pursue moving forward with the program and to investigate the possibility of grants. Councilmembers suggested Staff meet with the Finance Committee to identify funding sources and City Manager Steve Lewis said he would like for Staff to prepare a three year Action Plan to be submitted to the Finance Committee and ultimately, back to council within 30-45 days.

DISCUSSION REGARDING REGULATIONS AND ALTERNATIVES FOR THE OPERATION OF SPLASHPADS.

Due to timing, this item was not discussed and will be rescheduled to a future study session.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

ATTEST: